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Montana Kaimin, November 11, 2021

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MONTANA KAIMIN



RETURN TO THE ICE

UM Hockey is back and Missoula can't get enough

Story by Holly Malkowski
Photos by Lukas Prinos



7 Blood Battle

12 A \$200m mistake

16 Creepy crawlies

November 11, 2021 | Volume 124 | Issue No. 11

Kiosk



The Montana Kaimin is a weekly independent student newspaper at the University of Montana. The Kaimin office and the University of Montana are located on land originally inhabited by the Salish People. Kaimin is a derivative of a Salish language word, "Qe'ymin," that is pronounced kay-MEEN and means "book," "message" or "paper that brings news."

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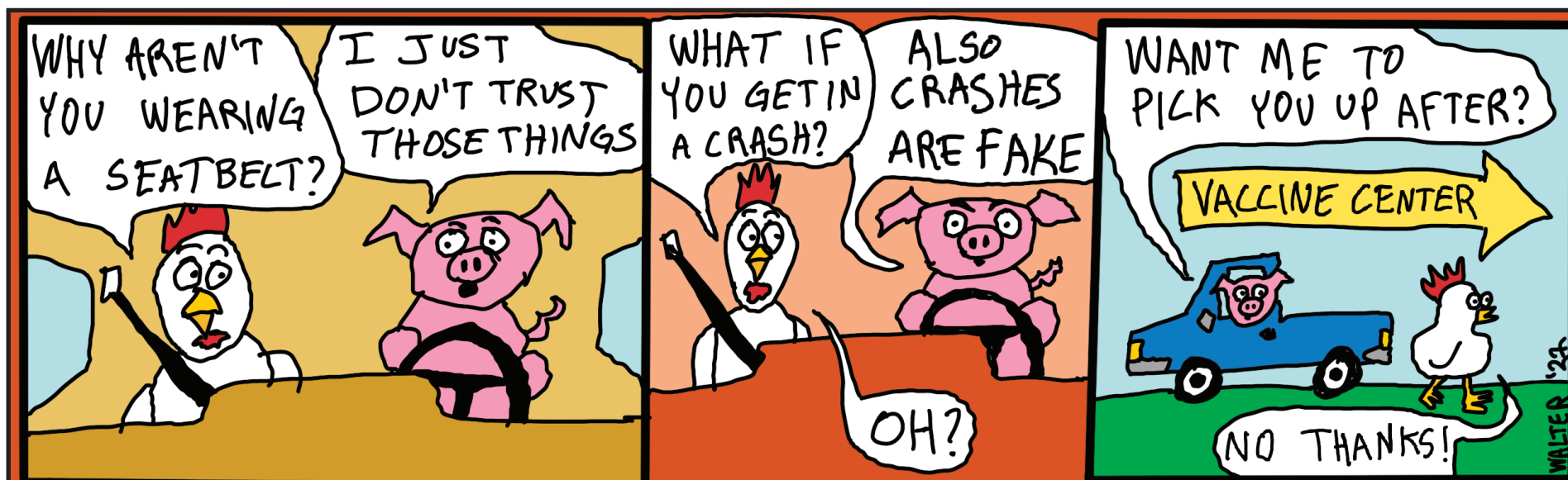
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THE GARAGE: SE 1 EP 11



WALTER MEDCRAFT | MONTANA KAIMIN

Now more than ever, UM needs ‘College Gameday’

In a tumultuous semester that’s seen lawsuits against President Seth Bodnar, a breakdown in law school leadership and a tenured computer science professor’s resignation after his controversial blog got put on blast, the potential of ESPN’s flagship college football show “College Gameday” coming to Missoula could boost morale.

It’s no secret “College Gameday” is a big deal, as its Twitter account boasts 2.9 million followers and the show itself broadcasts on the main ESPN channel. The show is hosted by four personalities who sit at a desk somewhere on the campus of the school they are visiting – and realistically, there isn’t a much better backdrop than Mount Sentinel.

“College Gameday” would probably air right from the Oval, with Main Hall looming over the desk. UM has a beautiful campus. The show would benefit from that.

Not only would Griz fans show up to the event, but the numerous Montana State fans traveling to Missoula for the Nov. 20 showdown would also be there, supporting the publicity for

our state over the rivalry between the schools.

This semester has been a bit of a kick in the face for students at UM. So has losing to MSU four times in a row over the last four years. But having our campus displayed on national TV may just ease the pain. If “College Gameday” comes, even if UM loses to MSU again, not all is lost.

And “College Gameday” brings on a guest related to the local university, who can give commentary and predictions on that week’s football games around the nation. UM has some great candidates to be guest commentators.

“Gameday needs to go to Missoula, Montana, for the Brawl of the Wild. It is what college football is all about,” Academy Award-winning actor and UM alum J.K. Simmons said on a prerecorded video posted on the UM football account.

U.S. Sen. Steve Daines (R) and Sen. Jon Tester (D) also joined in on the movement to bring the show to Missoula, filming a video together in their D.C. offices. If two senators from opposite sides of the aisle can agree “College Gameday”

should visit UM, then it definitely should.

UM has a dark past – especially involving its football program – and the fall semester has created some headlines that hearken back to the poor leadership patterns seen in the 2010s at UM.

But the UM students who have endured this semester need something big to look forward to. It may seem silly to think a TV show about football could do that, but “College Gameday” coming to town could be the morale boost we need.

Not to mention, if the show doesn’t show up, and the Griz football team doesn’t show up, and we rack up our losses to five in a row, well ... shit.

— Jack Marshall, Sports Editor

Like it? Hate it? Wish we were dead?
email us your opinions at editor@montanakaimin.com

To goat or not to goat



A Turner Farms goat happily munches on leftover Halloween pumpkins Nov 7. Soil Cycle, an environmental organization in Missoula that specializes in compost and organic waste collection, has provided the farm’s animal pumpkin feed for the last three years. Last week, Soil Cycle bins around Missoula collected carved and decorated pumpkins used for this year’s Halloween celebrations so they can be eaten by farm animals at Turner Farms, as opposed to letting them rot and release harmful methane emissions into landfills. The animals munch on the left over pumpkins and return the waste to the fields where more pumpkins will grow next year. **KENNEDY DELAP | MONTANA KAIMIN**

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SUDOKU

Edited by Margie E. Burke

Difficulty: Medium

	7		8	1				2
			3					
	8			7	5	3		
6		9	5				3	
					9	6		
					4	2		7
	2		7					
	9			5		7	1	6
3	6				1			

HOW TO SOLVE:

Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

8	9	1	3	7	5	2	4	6
6	7	3	4	9	2	1	5	8
5	4	2	8	6	1	7	3	9
7	6	8	1	2	3	5	9	4
1	5	4	9	8	6	3	7	2
3	2	9	7	5	4	6	8	1
2	8	6	5	3	9	4	1	7
9	1	5	6	4	7	8	2	3
4	3	7	2	1	8	9	6	5

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Briefs: Title IX complications, final congressional map and a vaccine mandate lawsuit

REPORT: ELDER RETALIATES AGAINST SEXUAL MISCONDUCT COMPLAINANT

A UM Title IX appeal committee reversed the findings of an initial Title IX investigation into claims of sexual misconduct against Jacob Elder on Nov. 3, according to a source familiar with the appellate process who spoke to the Daily Montanan last week.

The appeal found defeated mayoral candidate Elder retaliated against a complainant for participating in the initial investigation. Elder lost the Nov. 2 Missoula mayoral election by 26% and has not publicly commented on the results of the appeal.

The appeals committee also upheld the previous finding that cleared former Law School Dean Paul Kirgis and Associate Dean of Students Sally Weaver of wrongdoing in their roles as mandatory reporters in reporting instances of sexual misconduct to the Title IX office. However, it also ruled Weaver acted as a “gatekeeper” to the Title IX process and may have slowed down reporting through her office, according to the Daily Montanan.

The committee also noted Weaver’s power over students may have intimidated them from reporting to Title IX, and the law school could have been better served from “stronger leadership.”

UM has not disclosed the status of the case involving Elder, but continues to assert that any party involved can still appeal the outcome of both the initial investigation and the appeal to the Commissioner of Higher Education. (Emily Tschetter)

CONGRESSIONAL MAP FINALIZED

The Montana Districting and Apportionment Commission landed on a final map for the state’s two congressional seats, in many ways matching the state’s districts in the 1980s, the most recent decade Montana had two districts. The two districts would divide the state north-south along the Rocky Mountain Front.

The redistricting commission, which by law must turn in a final map on Nov. 14, has the unique task of remapping the state after the 2020 U.S. Census reallocated Montana a second congressional representative.

Last week, the committee debated four maps. Arguments centered around Park County, where Livingston is located. The county was part of the western district in the 1980s, and Democrats proposed it stay there.

Republicans and non-partisan chair Maylinn Smith voted to move Park County into the eastern district with Helena. The bipartisan commission will also be remapping the state’s legislative districts.

The districts will be used for the 2022 midterm election. (Griffen Smith)



COVID-19 UPDATE

The Missoula City-County Health Department reported three new UM-affiliated cases over the weekend as cases continued to drop after a record-breaking regional spike. The University has just 36 total active cases.

Countywide, there were 798 total active cases reported Monday, a steep drop from the 2,000 or more active cases Missoula averaged in October. There are still more than 30 active hospitalizations. Some of the total active numbers could be bloated from the health department’s previous inability to close cases.

Average new cases over the past seven days stand at 45 per 100,000 people.

The health department said the new case average needs to drop below 25 per 100,000 people to stop uncontrolled spread. The data also shows a

large discrepancy between vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. While vaccinated residents are testing positive at 27 per 100,000 people on average, unvaccinated residents are testing positive at 81 per 100,000 people a day.

Roughly 58% of the county’s residents have been fully vaccinated.

Recently, those ages 5 to 11 became eligible for the vaccine. UM’s Curry Health Center is offering the pediatric doses as well as booster shots for those who received the vaccine over two months ago. (GS)

MONTANA JOINS VACCINE MANDATE LAWSUIT

Montana’s Attorney General Austin Knudsen filed a lawsuit against the Biden administration’s new vaccine mandate for private companies. Knudsen said it is an “egregious overreach and sets the country down a dangerous path,” according to a Nov. 5 Montana Department of Justice news release.

The OSHA mandate would require companies with more than 100 employees to require their unvaccinated employees wear masks by Dec. 5, and then require all employees to get the COVID-19 vaccine or undergo weekly testing by Jan. 4. The Montana DOJ said that would affect 142,000 people, a third of Montana’s private sector workforce.

Knudsen, 10 other state attorney generals and three private employers petitioned the U.S. Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals to overturn the law, calling it “unconstitutional, unlawful, and unwise” in the press release.

Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte voiced support for the petition.

“Not only does President Biden’s mandate violate Montana law banning vaccine-based discrimination, but also it will further strain Montana employers already facing a worker shortage,” Gianforte said in a news release, referring to Montana House Bill 702, which forbids discrimination based on vaccine status. “We will use all tools at our disposal to protect Montanans against this gross, unprecedented federal overreach.” (Mazana Boerboom)

Blotter: Threatening marriage proposals, stolen heaters and awning hoppers

GRACE CARR

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Between Oct. 28 and Nov. 3, the University of Montana Police Department reported 12 crimes on and around campus. There is a new crime blotter trend this week, as bike theft is off the radar and minor in possession charges took the number one spot for the second week in a row.

THURSDAY 10/28: I DO, I DON’T

What started as a normal phone call ended in a declined marriage proposal. The Mansfield Library received a threatening phone call the afternoon of Oct. 28 and, initially, nothing seemed suspicious. However, according to UM Police Chief Brad Giffin, the call quickly went south after the caller

asked the library employee for their hand in marriage. UMPD logged the incident as a violation of privacy in communications, but UM was unable to trace the phone call. I know most of us are desperate for love, but I think this caller went a little too far.

FRIDAY 10/29: PRE-GAME HEATED THEFT

While the student section warms itself with the sweat of shirtless Griz fans, the UM football team uses cylinder-shaped torpedo heaters. At least, they used to. Two heaters were stolen from Washington-Grizzly Stadium sometime between Oct. 16 and 29. The expensive devices have not been found and there are no suspects or

video surveillance. Stay warm boys, you’ve got quite the brawl ahead of you.

SATURDAY 10/30: MYSTERY GLASS

What do you do with broken glass in a residence hall and no suspects? Officers don’t know either. UMPD received a Campus Security Authority report Oct. 30 concerning some broken glass in the lower level of Craig Hall. For those making bets about where the glass came from, here is a hint: It was not an attempted burglary.

SUNDAY 10/31: PANTZER HALL MIPS

Hey there Pantzer Hall, welcome back to

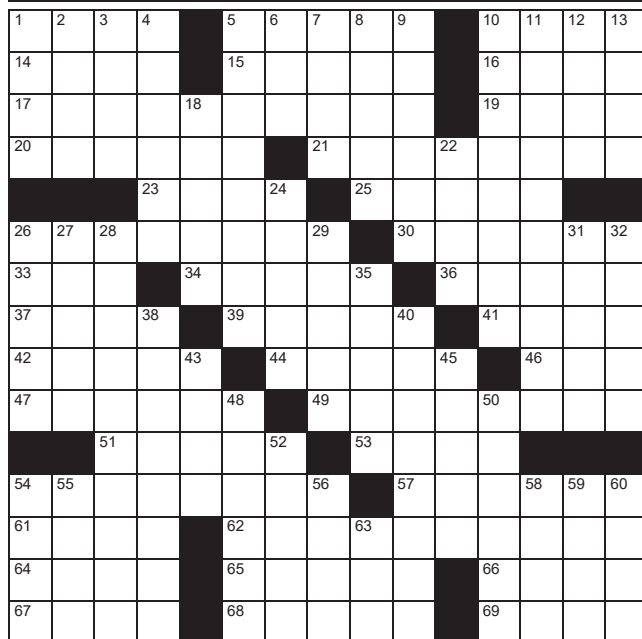
the blotter. Looks like this time you are here for three minor-in-possession charges. Two separate CSA reports found three students drinking under the age of 21. One was on Oct. 29 and the other two were on Halloween, and all three parties received law violations. And we thought Knowles Hall was the only troublemaker.

WEDNESDAY 11/03: AWNING HOPPERS

Are you bored? Is it a Wednesday night? Need a weird activity? Welcome to the blotter, because we’ve got you covered. A few students were caught jumping on one of the awnings of the Skaggs Building the night of Nov. 3. UMPD warned the daredevils, who left without causing any damage. I guess you could say the Skaggs building was “cough* hoppin’”. Sorry, I’m done now.

The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke



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ACROSS

- 1 Like the Sahara
- 5 In the rear, at sea
- 10 Lecher's look
- 14 Model's stance
- 15 Bishop's assistant
- 16 Rapper Flavor
- 17 Stitcher's specialty
- 19 Lincoln's bill
- 20 "Raging Bull" actor
- 21 Curved sword
- 23 Mike's "Wayne's World" co-star
- 25 Put into effect
- 26 Something brought to the table
- 30 Salad-bar stuff
- 33 Part of MPH
- 34 Brilliant success
- 36 Archer's ammo
- 37 Word before rock or rain
- 39 Really enjoy
- 41 "___ here"
- 42 Caravan beast
- 44 Waste channel
- 46 Smidgen
- 47 Beguile
- 49 Save for later
- 51 Hold off
- 53 Fair attraction
- 54 Jagger and Daltrey, et. al.
- 57 Gentle touch
- 61 Pocket particles
- 62 Like some tumors
- 64 Unpopular spots?
- 65 Begin, as winter
- 66 Poker hand
- 67 Bit of sweat

- 68 Like Diamond's Caroline
- 69 Promo overkill

DOWN

- 1 Mimicked
- 2 "Gladiator" setting
- 3 Bar code on a book
- 4 Make fun of
- 5 Space shuttle field
- 6 Auction action
- 7 Reno highs
- 8 Foolish show
- 9 Like ordeals
- 10 Badge holders
- 11 Fashionable set
- 12 Hot stuff
- 13 At any time
- 18 Speak at length
- 22 Rooney of "Carol"
- 24 Rand's shrugger
- 26 On the double
- 27 Popular pie
- 28 Temperamental diva
- 29 Roof overhang
- 31 Wandering one
- 32 Stockholm native
- 35 Pisa landmark
- 38 Insane
- 40 Not talkative
- 43 Artist's quarters
- 45 Clerk of the 4077th
- 48 Derelict
- 50 Angel with six wings
- 52 Extend, as a lease
- 54 Exercise target
- 55 Paella ingredient
- 56 Musical sound
- 58 Auction giant
- 59 Docking spot
- 60 Bone-dry
- 63 Bakery item

Answers to Previous Crossword:

C	A	R	D	E	W	E	R	P	L	A	N	S
A	L	E	E	N	A	M	E	A	U	D	I	T
G	A	L	A	P	A	G	O	S	P	L	U	T
E	M	I	N	E	M	T	I	M	A	L	L	E
D	O	C	S	O	M	E	D	A	Y	A	R	E
			O	K	R	A	E	N	A	C	T	
G	U	T	S	Y	R	A	N	G	A	I	D	E
E	M	I	T	N	I	F	T	Y	B	O	O	K
L	A	C	E	A	N	T	I	B	I	N	G	E
			T	R	A	D	E	A	L	A	N	
A	H	A	N	I	C	O	L	A	S	G	E	E
B	A	C	K	D	R	O	P	R	I	T	U	A
A	S	T	I	R	R	E	C	E	S	S	I	V
S	T	O	L	E	P	R	O	D	A	L	E	C
H	Y	E	N	A	S	A	G	O	R	E	S	T

The Sportscope



OLIVIA SWANT-JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

JACK MARSHALL

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The leaves are falling and the football, volleyball and soccer seasons are all in mid-swing here at UM, which means athletes and fans are consulting the stars to see how their teams will fare. The sport your sign is given isn't necessarily your favorite, but one you align with the most and should maybe try.

SCORPIO (OCT. 23–NOV. 21): Rugby. You don't feel a lot of fear and neither do rugby players. If you're not on the team already, then you should probably join it. Just like your view of the world, rugby is ruthless.

SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22–DEC. 22): Soccer. You're always trying to make yourself a better person and there's no way to do that like watching soccer on an autumn afternoon at South Campus Stadium. You just want everyone to get along, and the lack of violence in soccer is great for this.

CAPRICORN (DEC. 23–JAN. 19): Volleyball. You're not the biggest fan of football because there is too much going on in the student section for you. When you're watching Griz volleyball, you can mind your business in the bleachers and watch the game. If you go to a game and no one notices you, perfect.

AQUARIUS (JAN. 20–FEB. 18): The athletic endeavor that is reading conspiracy theories. Sure, you like sports, but to you, this is the only activity that matters. If there was a Jeopardy for conspiracies, you would win it all. You're convinced you're the only one who knows the underground-tunnels-at-UM "conspiracy."

PISCES (FEB. 19–MARCH 20): Ultimate Frisbee. Nothing like a little ultimate frisbee, especially in Missoula. You love making new friends and there isn't a better way to do that than to throw a disc around on the Oval, right?

ARIES (MARCH 21–APRIL 19): Hockey. You just love watching people on ice skates slam into each other. You're not quite sure why, but it keeps you from being bored. While most look away when punches are thrown on the ice, you get excited.

TAURUS (APRIL 20–MAY 20): Baseball. Going to a Pad-leheads game is enjoyable as long as the giant moose mascot doesn't scare the hell out of you. You can sit in your seat, eat peanuts and watch pitch after pitch.

GEMINI (MAY 21–JUNE 20): Football! So unique and original you are. You love to go to the very first game in all maroon (and it will probably be the only game you go to, but that doesn't matter). Also a great opportunity to take a spicy Instagram photo.

CANCER (JUNE 21–JULY 22): Hiking. Going on a hike out in the Missoula wilderness is exactly your cup of tea. The woods are comforting to you. If enjoying yourself on a hike was an Olympic sport, you'd win gold.

LEO (JULY 23–AUG. 22): Basketball. You love the creativity on display in basketball because you consider yourself the ultimate creative mind. Also nothing helps you stand out in a crowd like wearing a basketball jersey. When UM makes it into March Madness, you *go out on a limb* and pick them.

VIRGO (AUG. 23–SEP. 22): The dance team? It's not exactly a sport, but you're not exactly sporty. You love watching the dance team do their thing, and you're so proud of them because no one except you understands how much work it takes.

LIBRA (SEP. 23–OCT. 22): Skiing. Nothing helps your cute aesthetic like some photos of you on the ski hill. Also, you love hanging out with your friends on the lift — as long as you don't get left alone, because if that happens, skiing is NOT your sport.

Humanities and Sciences set to lose tenured faculty

JACOB OWENS

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The University of Montana's College of Humanities and Sciences could lose 15 tenured faculty members after UM administrators offered early retirement incentives to senior faculty at the college this fall.

The 15 faculty members tentatively accepted an offer extended to 39 full-time and tenured faculty by the Nov. 1 deadline, according to UM's Director of Strategic Communications Dave Kuntz. The early retirement offers come as UM's largest college has experienced millions of dollars in cuts in recent years.

Julie Baldwin, an associate dean of the Humanities and Sciences, said the retirements are due to the college's current budget and lower enrollment numbers.

"So this retirement incentive is an attempt to help get our budget in alignment with our current enrollments in the college, while still maintaining our programs and offerings," she said.

Baldwin said the college, which has roughly 20 programs and departments, has about 3,100 students, down 5% from pre-COVID enrollment in 2019. The University recently boosted its overall numbers by 3% this fall.

She said the college currently has about 225 faculty members. There are approximately 480 total UM faculty under contract for fiscal year 2022, according to Kuntz.

Faculty members eligible for early retirement needed at least 86 years of combined age and years of service at UM. They had until Nov. 7 to make a final decision.

Those who accepted the offer will receive their base salary after leaving the University, according to Acting Provost Reed Humphrey.

Maddie Hagan, a senior majoring in history and philosophy, said the retiring professors will not be replaced.

"The potential of losing 15 professors is terrible because that means 15 professors will not be replaced," she said.

Hagan cited Robert Greene, a Russian history professor who died last December. She said his spot has remained unfilled within the college.

Hagan said a lack of courses and holes in curriculum already exist in the college and the buyouts will only worsen with the retirements. She said she's experienced

the lack of courses available first-hand as she tries to fulfill all her graduation requirements as a double major.

Baldwin said new faculty can be hired behind the retired faculty at a lesser expense to help fill "critical needs."

Humphrey said the benefits of offering the early retirement incentives outweigh the risks.

"The benefit to the early retirement incentive is sort of like this gross reduction in expenses," he said. "The risk, of course, is that you might lose productive senior faculty who opt to retire early."

Humphrey said the University will resolve any possible gaps in curriculum left by the retirements.

"When a key faculty member leaves the University for another job, or retires and creates a gap in the curriculum, it's essential that the University resolves that gap," he said.

Humphrey said the retirements are one way to reach projected budget cuts to the college. He said the cuts are a way to reallocate funds to programs that are growing at UM.

Hagan organized a protest last spring in response to a March proposal of \$2.6 million in budget cuts to the college by 2023. The college has had \$10.4 million in cuts since 2015.

Baldwin said the budgeted cuts by 2023 will actually be around \$2 million because of savings from the last fiscal year.

The retirement offers are also to increase the student-to-faculty ratio. Stacey Eve, the interim associate vice president for operations and finance, said the retirements will bring UM closer to the target of an 18-to-1 student-faculty ratio.

UM's student-faculty ratio is budgeted for 17-to-1, according to the University's Operating Budget Metrics for fiscal year 2022.

Baldwin, who's been with the college for 16 years, said there's always a fear that cuts to the college may result in a further decrease in enrollment.

"I've been here throughout this entire time period, and my hope is no, that we still through all of these budget declines have been able to mostly maintain all of our offerings and programs," she said.

Baldwin highlighted the recently added bachelor's degree in creative writing at the college and said the college is looking at potentially adding more programs, even in light of the retirements.

Humphrey said academic year employees have until May 14 to retire and fiscal year employees until June 30. The payouts must occur within 90 days of the dates.



MAKAYLA O'NEIL | MONTANA KAIMIN

UM and MSU face off in Brawl of the Wild food and blood drives

EMILY TSCHETTER

emily.tschetter@umontana.edu

Exuberant nurses sporting bright red T-shirts greeted students three at a time in a small office inside the University of Montana pharmacy school Nov. 5. While feel-good pop relics of the 2000s provided background sound, people lay back in leather chairs squeezing stress balls as Red Cross volunteers jabbed their arms with needles to draw blood donations.

The drive saw little traffic, but workers continued boosting morale among the donors, and spirits remained high in their efforts for a good cause.

The Red Cross and Missoula community food banks are riding a wave of enthusiasm leading up to the Brawl of the Wild football game Nov. 20. Paired with the game are two cross-town competitions: the Cat-Griz Blood Battle and Can the Cats Food Drive.

The blood drive started Nov. 5 with a student-focused blood drive at the School of Pharmacy, which will host four more drives through Nov. 17. The food drive began with a Nov. 6 Lady Griz Volleyball game, where attendants could donate five cans of food for free entry. The drive will end with the Brawl of the Wild game.

Carmen Thissen, the events and marketing coordinator for the Missoula Food Bank, said the Food Bank and UM Food Pantry need donations now more than ever.

"In our Missoula community, the pandemic has obviously been really hard on a lot of families," Thissen said. "We as a community center have helped to meet the basic food needs of one in five people who call Missoula County home, which is more people than the max capacity of Washington-Grizzly Stadium."

This year marks the 22nd Can the Cats competition, of which UM has only won four. Last year, UM beat the Cats by 267,525 pounds of food, and the Missoula Food Bank is aiming for 406,000 total pounds this year.

"When it comes to Can the Cats, the coolest thing is having it tied to the athletic events to make it exciting and also hopefully engage people who might not otherwise think of donating to the food bank," Thissen said.

Matthew Ochsner, the American Red Cross of Montana communications director, said this year's blood drive is especially crucial to combat a national blood shortage resulting from the COVID-19



Abbagail Hyde, a University of Montana student majoring in pre-med, makes her first blood donation at a Nov. 5 blood drive in the School of Pharmacy for the cross-town Cat-Griz Blood Battle. Hyde was inspired to donate blood by one of her classes at the pharmacy school. **KENNEDY DELAP | MONTANA KAIMIN**

pandemic.

"We're at our lowest point of blood donation at this part of the year than we've been in the last 10 years. Part of this has to do, of course, with the challenges of COVID-19," Ochsner said. "We're a very strong blood-collecting state right now, and as compared to many other states, we're doing quite well. But if there's a need in another state, we will help support that state as well. All the blood that we collect here in Montana will find a home in an arm that needs it."

Ochsner said the Cat-Griz Blood Battle targets first-time donors during a part of the year where donations often decrease, though the need for blood persists year-round.

"We tend to see a decrease in blood donations as we get into the holiday season as people get busy, but there's still a constant demand for blood," Ochsner said. "It's so important that we get new people to realize how important blood donation is, and college students provide a great opportunity to turn a first-time donor maybe into a lifetime donor."

Abbagail Hyde, a UM student majoring in pre-med, made her first donation at a Nov. 5 blood drive in the pharmacy school. She said her hematology course inspired her to donate and help hospitals in need.

"I will definitely donate again," Hyde said. "I think it's important when becoming a part of the medical field, and I just want to help whoever I can."

Chelyn Rice, a phlebotomist and the leader of the Nov. 5 blood drive, has been working with the Red Cross for two years and donating blood since she graduated high school. Rice said the Red Cross aimed for 24 donations at the first drive, but added they would probably not achieve their goal for the first day.

"We've had a few no-shows, but we're very happy to be here," Rice said. "America is critically short on blood right now, and colleges have diversified populations with many different blood types, so it's important that students donate. Once you get past that first time, it's really not that bad."

UM will host four more blood collection sites before the Brawl of the Wild game, and the food drive has locations across

town for food donations and accepts cash donations online. Details on how to sign up to donate blood are on the American Red Cross of Montana Facebook Page, and the event calendar and location list for the food drive are on the Missoula Food Bank website.

"In the past 10 years alone, we have collected more than 1,760 units of lifesaving blood at Cat-Griz Blood Battle drives," Ochsner said. "Nationwide, blood donations at high school and college drives account for as much as 20% of donations during the school year. University blood drives play a critical role in ensuring an adequate community blood supply."

RETURN TO THE ICE



Montana hockey players celebrate after the team's first ever win against the Montana State Bobcats on Oct. 2 in front of a home crowd at Glacier Ice Rink. The Griz tamed the Cats with a 4-2 victory.

After a decade frozen over, UM Hockey makes a comeback

Story by Holly Malkowski
Photos by Lukas Prinos

S **NOW SPRAYED** under the feet of rapidly skating players as the University of Montana's hockey team took to the ice in front of 1,300 screaming fans. Party lights beamed around the rink, beanies and beer filled the stadium, fans and players alike slammed the glass barriers and the rink cat, Breezer, hid from all the noise.

The first UM hockey game in a decade was sold out. Griz hockey merchandise quickly disappeared from a table near the front of Glacier Ice Rink. Maroon-clad fans jeered or gasped at every hit, high-fived for every save and erupted every time the puck sailed into the goal. The players chirped to the other team on the ice and slammed their sticks into the wall in front

of the bench in celebration.

A once nearly empty Glacier Ice Rink is now flooded with Griz hockey fans on Friday and Saturday nights when the new team hosts a home game. Extra bleachers for students had to be added after the first home game on Oct. 2. During the commotion in the rink, the coaches yelled through the noise and Tucker Sargent, the team's general manager, took tickets and performed other behind-the-scenes tasks.

Sargent is UM's championship-winning head lacrosse coach. As a student at UM in 2007, he was part of the Griz lacrosse team's national championship title. He was a league All-American and three time all-conference player.

As head lacrosse coach, he led his team to two national tournaments and continues

to further the team with his coaching and management.

But Sargent has a passion for hockey, too. Back in 2012 — the last time UM had a hockey team, according to Sargent — the players had to coach themselves and do their own marketing, on top of being students and athletes. Montana hockey didn't have much of a following then.

The University of Montana was not required to make a financial commitment to the team because it was a club sport.

On top of that, the players had to pay their own way to participate in club hockey. The Griz team couldn't keep up with all the responsibilities and fell apart. A University of Montana hockey team wouldn't emerge again until this year, when Sargent brought back Griz hockey as a club sport.

Now, Sargent markets and manages the club team, and it has accomplished coaches Mike Anderson and Will Grossmann to keep the team sharp. Sargent helps with on-ice practices as well.

Because Sargent brought Griz hockey back from its nearly decade-long hiatus, and a former Missoula-based junior hockey team gave the coaches players to recruit, the Missoula community has rallied around the team in a way that wasn't possible in 2012.

Grizzlies in Hibernation

After the loss of Griz hockey in 2012, the hockey community in Missoula saw little activity until 2016.

In 2016, the Glacier Ice Rink became home to the Missoula Jr. Bruins, a North American Tier III Junior Hockey League team. This NA3HL league is for players, typically those between high school and college, who are looking to get noticed by other coaches to further their hockey careers, or just to play hockey for a few more years.

Junior hockey players live with “billet families” for the season — families who essentially adopt the players as their own kids. Missoula billets come to Griz games to see the players they're hosting.

Many junior hockey players choose to go to college after they age out of the NA3HL or run out of eligible years of play, including a lot of the Missoula Jr. Bruins hockey team.

But after struggles with funding tied to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Missoula Jr. Bruins team was sold by the owners, and it moved to South Dakota under new leadership in 2021.

Then, Sargent teamed up with the Jr. Bruins' former coaches to bring Griz hockey back.

In February 2021, Sargent asked Jr. Bruins coaches Mike Anderson and Will Grossmann to run the new Griz hockey team, and they started recruiting players.



Tucker Sargent, UM Hockey's general manager, was a key figure in bringing back Griz club hockey to Missoula. Sargent, who is also UM's championship-winning head lacrosse coach, now markets and manages the club team after Griz hockey's nearly 10-year hiatus. (Above)

Anderson, the Jr. Bruins' co-head coach, had his own college hockey career that took him from high school in Minnesota to Maine, where he played at the University of New England in Biddeford. In his home state of Minnesota, he played for the junior league Hudson Crusaders and at Saint Mary's University. Since college, Anderson has coached all levels of hockey, from 10 year olds in St. Paul, Minnesota, to college players in Missoula today.

Co-head coach Grossmann has a strong background in hockey as well, in Ohio during college at the University of Toledo. His career there was cut short by his move to Missoula. He came to UM to study exercise science. Grossmann loves to help his niece with her hockey skills on the frozen ponds of Montana in the winter. He also helps with clinics and training camps, as well as working with Sargent at Hockeywolf, a local business that sells gear for the team.

Sargent owns Hockeywolf, an equipment shop for lacrosse and hockey, in addition to his coaching job with Griz lacrosse and his new position directing the Griz hockey team.

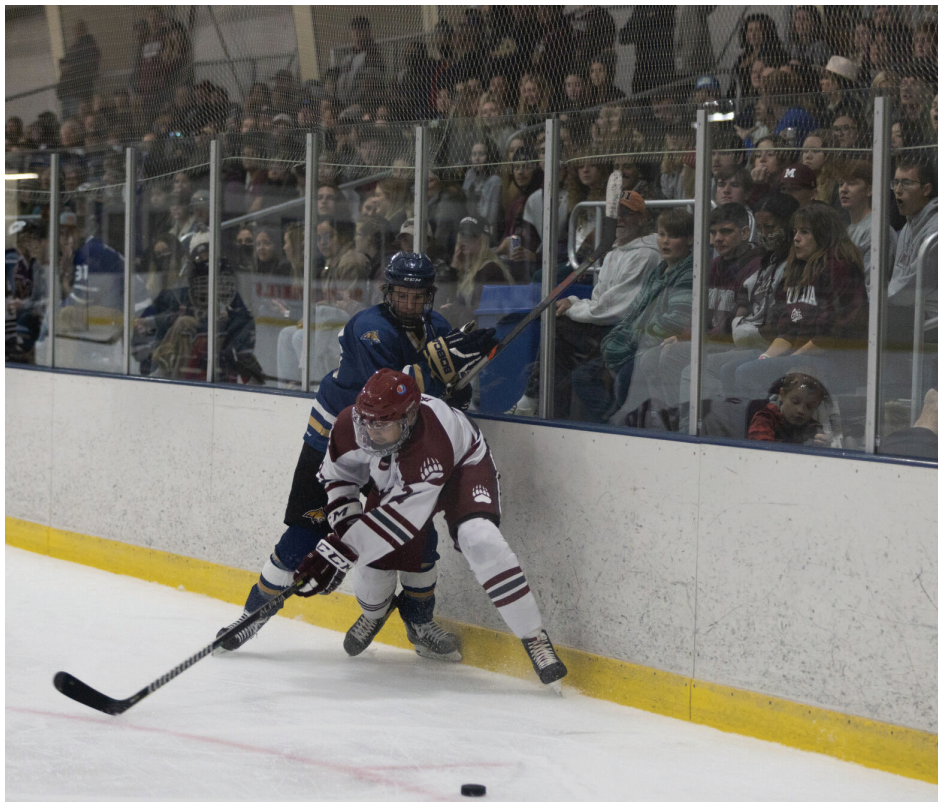
Luckily for Sargent, Anderson and Grossmann, they had a place to start when they decided to resurrect UM hockey — recruiting former Jr. Bruins players. A few players currently on the team moved in from other NA3HL teams, but most came back to Missoula from the Jr. Bruins team.

“Once people experience Missoula, it tends to get a grip on them, and keeping them here or getting them back is a pretty easy sell,” Anderson said.

Now, Sargent markets the team and pairs with the Missoula Broadcasting Company to elevate the reputation of Griz hockey. He gets the word out for its games on radio, social media and in advertisements. The games are shown on the Griz Hockey website and broadcasted on ESPN



UM Hockey team members huddle and raise their sticks in the air at the end of a practice.



UM Hockey's James Clow fights for possession of the puck as he's pinned up against the glass by a Montana State University player at Glacier Ice Rink on Oct. 2.

102.9.

"If you want to elevate the program, you have to elevate the perception of the program first," Sargent said. "We want guys that want to be at the University of Montana, not just play hockey. We want the kids who want to be at the University of Montana for all the other reasons that Montana is awesome: the student life here, the academics, the programs that the University offers, the outdoors."

In the NA3HL, players can be traded or moved at any time, so by playing for the Griz instead, the players can form a tighter community and know that they will likely be together for the next four years.

Ty Dittman, a sophomore forward on the team from Colorado, said he enjoys being part of the hockey community in Missoula.

"It's kind of nice to have actual fans, and actually be a part of a hockey community," Dittman said.

Out of the penalty box

Griz Hockey is different after its hiatus. The team has an experienced coaching staff, a dedicated manager and a fanbase that grows with every game. The team is in the midst of playing a 30-game schedule as a member of the American Collegiate Hockey Association (ACHA) against other college hockey teams. The students no longer have to take responsibility for all of the team duties and can focus on being

student athletes.

Having someone proficient in marketing and running a team like Sargent gives the program a headstart on every other beginning club program.

Sargent also focuses on growing a community with a strong emphasis on family on the lacrosse team, even inviting the players over for dinners and letting them play with his dogs.

"Coupled with his experience, Tuck (Sargent) adds an infectious positive energy that makes you believe in what we are doing and he has really led the charge in building up the excitement and energy in the community," Anderson said. "He's just a super positive guy and we would not be a program without him."

The players are now all University students.

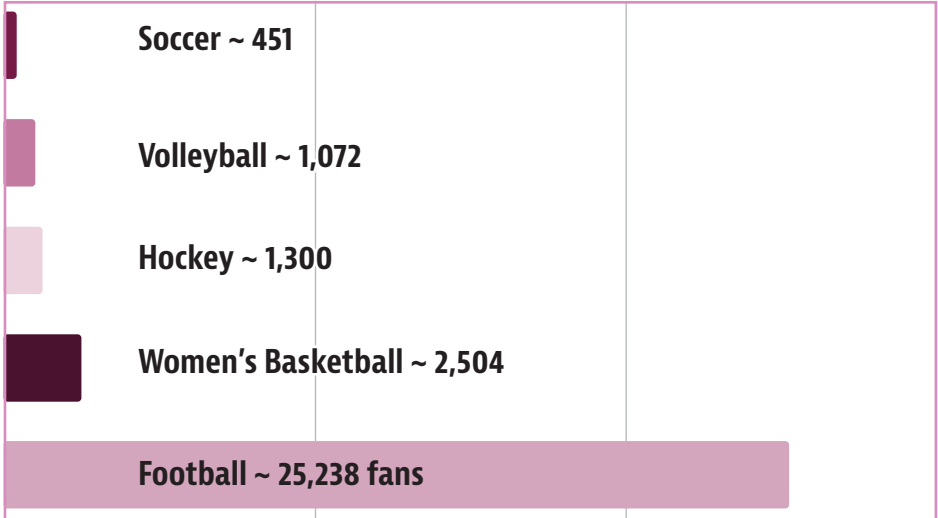
Being on the team helps players manage their time and responsibilities, according to Anderson. The players must take a certain number of credits and keep their grades up to play, even in a club sport. Anderson said he makes sure his players focus on school first, hockey second.

Sophomore defenseman Wyatt Ploot, a Dean's Leadership Scholar in the honors college at UM and a Kalispell native, said this focus on school is helpful for him.

"It's a good break between classes," Ploot said. "I've noticed, just mentally, I can pay attention in class more and I have more energy, just because I get a break for

Highest-Attended Home Games, 2021

By number of recorded attendants



UM Hockey reports 1,300 fans for its highest attended home game, beating out volleyball and soccer.

MCKENNA JOHNSON | MONTANA KAIMIN

something like this."

Hockey is an injury-rich sport, so schedules, positions and starters are often changing. Sharp skates, big hits and a whole lot of "conkys," which is hockey speak for concussions, can take players out at any time.

The team is also not untouched by the COVID-19 pandemic. Griz players have had COVID-19, and at times they can't make it to practice due to quarantine. An October road trip to the University of Washington had to be postponed because the Grizzlies couldn't take the chance of more players sitting out.

The players are from different backgrounds but quickly formed a family while working to shape this team, Sargent said. They are new to the program, come from all over the country, and span many different ages and levels of experience. Some came straight from high school, others from the Juniors league, and a few even came back after years off from high school-level hockey. Despite their differences, the team worked hard to connect and become friends on and off the ice.

"You can talk about culture, and I think you have to talk about culture, but it takes commitment from the players to buy into it and it just takes the right guys to believe it," Sargent said.

The Griz opened the season with four wins, two against their rival, the Montana State University Bobcats. The team lost its next three games, but is playing competitively as a first-year program.

For the first game of the season, Sargent printed 800 tickets and was astonished when those tickets all sold and people were still flooding into Glacier Ice Rink. The first two home games broke the

Glacier Ice Rink attendance record, at 1,100 and 1,300 fans. These numbers are larger than the average attendance for the last soccer and volleyball games, which averaged 451 and 1,072 fans, respectively. The team still sees less attendance than football and women's basketball, though.

Rowdy students show up, along with avid hockey fans and old Bruins billet families. The team has gathered a steady fanbase of community members, too.

"The team feeds off of (the community) support," Sargent said.

Will Hays, a freshman goalie on the team, played last season with the Jr. Bruins and decided to stay in Missoula for the city and the hockey community.

"The Griz just have a much tighter community. Like, the whole city is in on it," Hays said.

Sargent said the team and coaches have been blown away by the backing of this hockey team in Missoula.

"It's really fun, there's a lot of energy and there's a lot of people here. It always really surprises me," Serena Miller, a fan, said.

The student section is filled every home game, and the University even offers a free shuttle to and from the game for students.

"It's a very fun game; it's much faster than football, there's no stops, they get into fights, it's great." Aine Fannon, a UM student, said. "It's a little scary when the puck comes flying at you."

A new Ice Age

Sargent is proud of how the team is playing as a first-year program.

"It's a building process. We started with



Director of Griz Hockey Tucker Sargent, right, watches a drill take place during a UM Hockey practice session at Glacier Ice Rink on Oct. 28. In addition to managing the team, Sargent assists with assistant coaching at practices.

nothing. I'm very happy where we're at right now," Sargent said.

Because it's a first-year program, the team is in its probationary year at the University. This means the team cannot qualify for playoffs after the end-of-year tournament, the Montana Cup.

There's still a gap between teams that compete at the national level and the new Griz club hockey team, but Sargent thinks in five years, UM hockey can be a team that competes with the best in the league.

"If you want a championship-caliber hockey team in Missoula, keep showing up, because recruiting gets so much easier when we can show kids coming in: This is who you get to play for. The city of Missoula, the University students, the University

cares about its hockey team," Sargent said.

Montana does not have an NHL team, and after the departure of the Missoula Bruins NA3HL team, Griz hockey offers the only option in town to attend a high-level hockey game in-person for those who enjoy watching the sport.

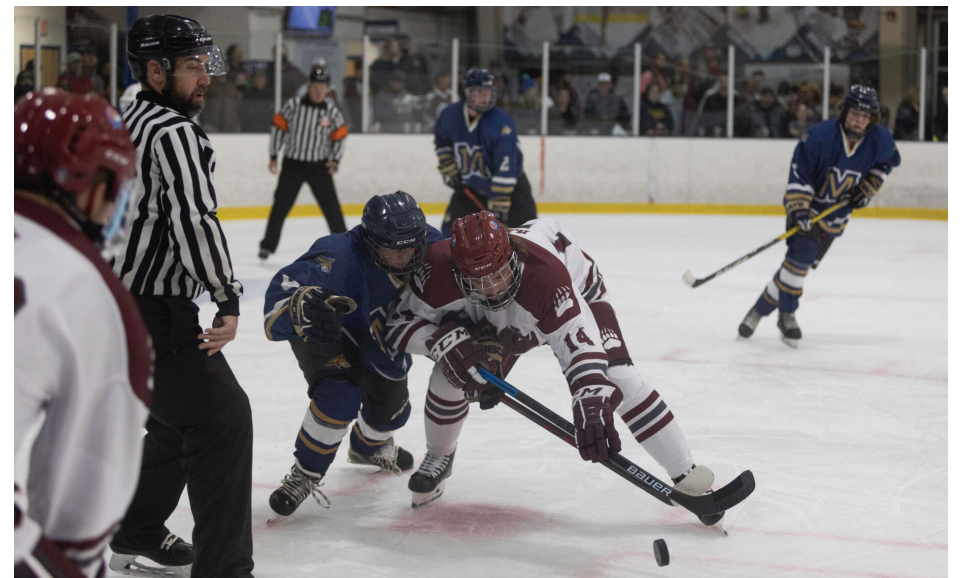
More importantly, the revamped team provides role models for young athletes and entertainment for students, community members and hockey fans. Sargent said the youth hockey programs of Missoula are already strong, but this team gives kids even more reason to continue playing hockey and something to work toward.

Anderson added that the team is overwhelmed by fan support.

"We were not entirely sure what to



Breezer the rink cat sits atop a set of hockey goals at Glacier Ice Rink.



UM's Henry Morrison fights for the puck during a game against Montana State University at Glacier Ice Rink on Oct. 2. The Griz beat the Bobcats 4-2 in dominant fashion in front of a packed venue.

expect, but through the first three home games, we could not be more excited and humbled by the support we have received. The fan support we have takes our program to a level that most college hockey teams, club or not, never get to, and we have it in our first year," Anderson said.

And, for players, being affiliated with the school for the first time in almost a decade is meaningful.

"Now we're playing for the school, so we're actually representing something," Dittman said.

While Griz Hockey of the early 2010s

wasn't sustainable in support or management, according to Sargent, the UM hockey team should keep growing in the future. The community and school support, along with recruitment, will help Griz Hockey excel in the coming years.

Eddy Lochridge, a sophomore forward on the Griz hockey team and a Missoula native, said there's something special about having college hockey back in Missoula.

"College hockey in my hometown... it's a dream come true," Lochridge said.

‘Eternals’ shoots for the moon; lands among the ‘blahs’

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Any superhero film worth its salt needs a great villain, and the latest Marvel film “Eternals” has plenty to pick from.

There are the villains director Chloé Zhao (“Nomadland”) wrote into the story, sure — CGI tentacle porn monsters aptly called “Deviants.” But looming much larger are the villains Zhao did not intend: an unwieldy script, bizarre tone shifts, a dozen actors battling for screen time and a supersized story that proves blockbuster machine Marvel can’t always have its cake and eat it, too.

“Eternals” is a film that lives and dies by its many villains — and a few heroes, too. Let’s see if we can sort out which reign victorious once the credits roll.

HERO: THE PREMISE. As the 26th film in the Marvel Cinematic Universe — a franchise that’s done everything from spy thrillers to space comedies — “Eternals” is something unique: a kind of cosmic myth attempting to tell a story spanning 7,000 years. The film follows the titular Eternals, a race of superpowered, immortal aliens who come to Earth on a mission to defend the planet from the nefarious Deviants, monsters seeking to destroy the human race. The Eternals must help humankind evolve, but are sworn by

their masters, the space-god Celestials, to never interfere in human affairs.

Whew. It’s a wild concept, even in a franchise that saw a martial artist beat up a cthulhu kaiju with some glowing rings in its last entry. But Zhao was onto something with “Eternals,” which is at its best when it embraces its mythic elements.

VILLAIN: THE STORY. Given the already absurd but alluring concept behind “Eternals,” it’s not surprising Zhao and her army of screenwriters bit off more than they can chew. The story flashes back and forth from 5,000 B.C., to present-day London, to the ancient Aztec city of Tenochtitlan, to modern Chicago for a five-minute scene, then back to the past. Brace yourself for cinematic whiplash trying to keep up with story moments as they unfold across eons. It’s perhaps most baffling that Zhao tries so hard to make immortal gods feel relatable when they keep tossing around the word “human” like the extraterrestrial tourists they are.

HERO: THE VISUALS. Zhao brings her visual sensibilities from her airy, vista-filled “Nomadland” to “Eternals,” and it’s better for it. The green-screen locales of Marvel films before are gone, replaced by real grassy fields and tangible, sandy beaches. The movie’s visual prowess extends to the camerawork and visual effects, which work in

tandem to entice the viewer to ignore those other “villains” for a while.

VILLAIN: A GIGANTIC CAST. Whoever thought this film could introduce a dozen unheard-of superheroes and give them meaningful character development, equal screen time and satisfying emotional arcs was smoking some ensemble-cast dope.

VILLAIN: MARVEL STUDIOS. In the battle between Marvel’s formula of frenetic quips and comic relief characters and Zhao’s instinct for stoic storytelling, both are losing this one. “Eternals” is surely the only film where a character goes from mourning the creation of the atomic bomb to joking about his IKEA dinner table. Marvel swung for the fences by hiring Zhao fresh off her Best Picture Oscar, but instead of handing her the bat and blasting a home run, they’re stuck with a muddle-toned strikeout.

CONCLUSION: AN ADMIRABLE MESS. Look, Marvel has had the formula for a billion-dollar movie locked down for a decade now. They didn’t have to take a risk, but they did with “Eternals” — a \$200 million risk. What’s left is a movie that tries to be many things and fails at most of them. Like a car crash unfolding in slow motion, it’s hard to look away from “Eternals,” even if the “villains” win the day this time.



CONTRIBUTED

‘The French Dispatch’ is a love letter to journalism from the weirdest guy you know

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This weekend, acclaimed director Wes Anderson released his 10th feature film “The French Dispatch,” and it might be his most ambitious yet.

Anderson manages to pack dozens of characters, well-planned arcs and ingenious writing into segments much smaller than what he and his audience are used to. Each segment has something to love that sets it apart from the rest.

The movie tells the story of the French division of a Kansas magazine, the “Evening Sun.” Bill Murray plays the editor, Arthur Howitzer Jr., and leads a staff of reporters played by stars like Owen Wilson, Tilda Swinton, Frances McDormand and Jeffrey Wright as they work to create the final issue of “The French Dispatch.”

Unlike Anderson’s past films, “The French Dispatch” is made up of several distinct sections, representing articles published by the different reporters. There are three main stories, varying wildly but all sharing the classic

Anderson aesthetic.

The first is titled “The Concrete Masterpiece” and is about a criminally insane painter, played masterfully by Benicio del Toro, who has his big break in a prison art class after using a guard as a nude model.

The second is “Revisions to a Manifesto,” about students, led by King Timothée Chalamet, taking to the streets to fight for their rights against the police. Meanwhile, the reporter, played by McDormand, can’t keep from inserting herself into the story (something I would never do).

The final piece is “The Private Dining Room of the Police Commissioner,” which features a famous cop/chef, Steve Park’s Lt. Nescafier, saving the commissioner’s son from an attempted kidnapping ... through food.

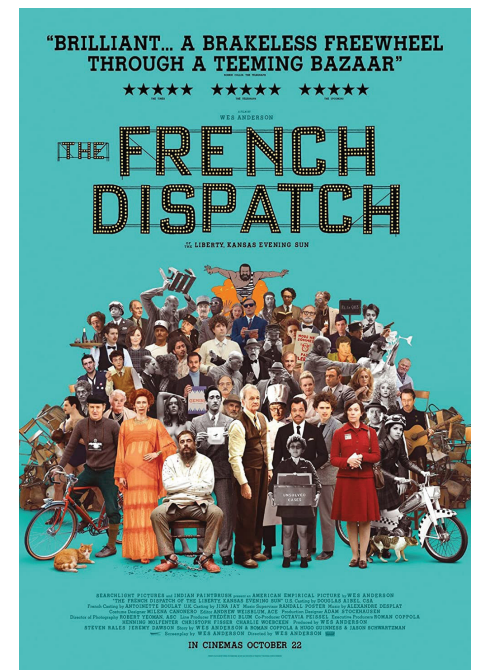
One of the highlights of “The French Dispatch” is the incredible ensemble cast. We get to see dozens of Anderson’s recurring players, like Edward Norton and Willem Dafoe, but it’s the newcomers who really steal the show, especially del Toro and Chalamet. It’s as if they were born to be in his movies. Weirdos flock to Anderson like moths to a lamp.

But it’s the story that makes you stay. Whether they’re captains of a deep-sea submarine or literally animated foxes, the characters in Anderson’s stories are always entirely human, and “The French Dispatch” is no exception.

Behind the bright colors and refined comedy is the deep-seated feeling of melancholy that comes with being a human being. A smile is an accessory, just like the glitz and glamour of Hollywood, masking a universal sense of loneliness.

But for every tortured artist who will never be able to have what’s right in front of them, for every brave young rebel fighting for an impossible cause and for every passionate chef willing to lay down their life for an unattainable flavor, there is still so much hope. There’s beauty. There’s pure unbridled joy. This, at its core, is what “The French Dispatch” is about.

It’s about people. Not just the people who do remarkable things, but the people who risk it all to be there and see those things happen. The people who care enough to put it on paper and share it with the world. This one is for the journalists.



CONTRIBUTED

UC photo gallery captures the beauty of destructive fire

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Taken in the haze of summer smoke, the black-and-white photos featured in the University Center's Gallery don't need color to capture a landscape ravaged by wildfire. Pictures of the charred bark of trees, rivers winding between fire-scarred hills and a burnt tree trunk in a field of wildflowers depict fires both as an agent of destruction and of rejuvenation.

"Burnt landscapes are often thought of as ugly and destroyed and catastrophic," said Mark Kreider, a UM doctoral student in forest and conservation sciences. "But a landscape like the Selway-Bitterroot has had fires for thousands of years. I see it as a portrait of a landscape linked to fire."

Kreider, who grew up in the great plains of Kansas, discovered his love for photography his freshman year of high school using an old point-and-shoot camera to take pictures of his yard. Since then, he's taken his love for photography to the field. For two months, Kreider carried a camera through 1-3 million acres of the rugged Selway-Bitterroot wilderness to take pictures of the burnt landscape shown in his UC gallery's new exhibit "Wilderness Fire."

The gallery is in tandem with Kreider's dissertation research of how warm and dry weather compared to cool and wet weather influences forest development over several decades.

Kreider said he calls the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness a great "natural laboratory," because fires are allowed to burn naturally without suppression.

Working with a UM research team, Kreider studied vegetation, structure, composition and fuel loads. Kreider said he shot his pictures spontaneously in between setting up camp and rigorous field work.

His gallery features photos of wide-open landscapes and closeup shots of old, charred trees. "Morning in the Selway," a photo of the Selway River winding through both barren hills and hills lush with trees, reflects this dichotomy between the landscape, Kreider said. For photos like "Charred Snag and Burned Trees," Kreider focuses on the patterns left behind by fire on tree bark.

Regardless of the composition, Kreider said he quickly decided he wanted all of his photos to be black and white because it captures both the smoke and the long history of the Selway-Bitterroot wilderness.

"Black and white kind of has a timeless feel to it," said Kreider. "Which is why I thought it was appropriate for a place where fires have been a thing for a long time."

Amanda Barr, the UC gallery director, said she was intrigued by the composition of the gallery, particularly because of its contrast to previous exhibits featured in the UC. She said generally artists get a lot of freedom, but that photographers are sometimes restricted to what's in front of them.

For "Wilderness Fire," Barr said Kreider effectively works with composition for a land marked by fire.

"It kind of captures the power of the land," Barr said. "It's the brutality of the burn and the starkness of the landscape that makes it beautiful."

Barr also noted how Kreider's photos were taken on land where the Nez Perce and Salish Kootenai peoples historically used fires to modify landscapes and food resources in beneficial ways. But with the removal of Indigenous peoples from their native lands, fire stewardship ended and fire suppression began.

Andrew Larson, a UM professor of forest ecology and Kreider's advisor, said that the illusion that fire suppression is the solution is fundamentally flawed.

"You're just deferring risk," Larson said. "Every fire you manage to put out, you still have fuels on the landscape and you're just kicking the can down the road."

But Larson clarified that fire can't be ignored. Prescribed fire that can be controlled, Larson said, is essential to reduce hazardous fuel loads near developed areas, restore natural wood lands and manage landscapes.

Kreider said he hopes to continue to raise more awareness for fire suppression and mitigation through his photography. He said photos are sometimes a better alternative to long research papers.

"It's a fun thing as a scientist," Kreider said. "Lots of times we just collect data and publish it in a journal. So I think it's cool to have more approachable ways to share ideas."

"Wilderness Fire" is on display in the UC gallery from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday until Dec. 10.



In his new exhibit "Wilderness Fire" at the UC Gallery, Mark Kreider, a graduate student at the University of Montana's College of Forestry & Conservation, showcases in a series of photographs the 1-3 million acres of burnt landscape in the Selway-Bitterroot wilderness. The gallery is a display of how climate and fire suppression affect the wilderness around Montana. **RIDLEY HUDSON | MONTANA KAIMIN**



On opening day, almost 30 people filled the UC Gallery for Kreider's exhibit reception. The exhibit will be open until Dec. 10. **RIDLEY HUDSON | MONTANA KAIMIN**

UM prepares for Big Sky Conference realignment

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Collegiate athletics conferences are a fluid landscape, subject to change season by season. With major realignments occurring in the Football Bowl Subdivision, UM expects to see some changes trickle down into the Big Sky Conference.

“[The Big Sky conference] is way too big already,” UM head football coach Bobby Hauck said. “Everybody needs to play everybody every year. If you got more teams than allow that, you get too big of a league in FCS [Football Championship Subdivision] football.”

While UM has no plans in the immediate future to shift conferences, according to both the Big Sky Commissioner’s office and University of Montana president Seth Bodnar, current conference realignment trends in the FCS and FBS are beginning to show their effects at the University and throughout the Big Sky.

Hauck said having a large conference negatively affects individual teams by creating a weaker schedule and allowing the possibility of a conference to share champions. The Big Sky Conference did this in 2012, when it had 13 affiliates and shared the conference title between Eastern Washington, Montana State and Cal Poly.

Despite being an FBS conference, Hauck said he is confident the Grizzlies could hold their own in the Mountain West, though it is unlikely this would occur.

“It’s ultimately going to come down to the presidents. They’re going to be the ones making that decision,” Hauck said. “But I think generally speaking, most presidents are going to talk to their football coaches, because it’s their world.”

“When conference realignments take root, there is certainly a domino effect and we are seeing that now across the country,” Bodnar stated via email. “Ultimately, each institution has to decide what is best for that university or college.”

Beginning in July 2022, Southern Utah University will leave the Big Sky Conference for the Western Athletic Conference, dropping the Big Sky’s affiliate members from 11 to 10. The WAC dropped football as a sponsored sport in 2013, but will begin participating in the FCS next season.

On Nov. 7, it was announced that FCS powerhouse James Madison would be leaving UM’s subdivision to play in the FBS Sun Belt Conference. The University of Oklahoma and Texas are playing in their last season

of the Big 12 Conference before transitioning to the nation’s best conference, the Southeastern Conference.

“Decisions made in Norman, Oklahoma and Austin, Texas trickle down to everybody, because it becomes a clamor or all the way down,” said Kent Haslam, Director of Athletics at UM. “The SEC takes schools from the Big 12, the Big 12 takes schools from the American, the American takes schools from Conference USA. They’ll go to FCS schools if they think [the schools] can move up.”

With the resurgence of the WAC and the newly sponsored ASUN Conference in the FCS, the Big Sky and its affiliate universities may be affected financially, stemming from shifts in media exposure and postseason automatic and at-large playoff bids.

In the FCS postseason, automatic bids are granted to each conference champion, while at-large bids are selected by the FCS Playoff Selection Committee for schools that did not win their conference, but demonstrate enough talent to participate in the National Championship Tournament.

The now-limited number of at-large bids affects schools financially, as the postseason is a time when schools rake in money through television contracts.

“With the WAC sponsoring football, they’ll petition to get an automatic bid, and that will be decided by the NCAA [National Collegiate Athletic Association],” Haslam said. “That would move 12 autos to now 12 at-larges, versus 10 autos and 14 at-larges. So that certainly impacts the championship.”

“The Big Sky is actively monitoring the size of the FCS playoff field, the number of at-large opportunities available and its impact on our members’ ability to qualify for the postseason as more automatic qualifiers are potentially added,” Tyson Rodgers, Assistant Commissioner of the Big Sky Confer-



University of Montana wide receiver Aaron Fontes (16) and safety Nash Fouch (4) listen to coaches on the sidelines as the Griz faced off against the Washington Huskies on Sept. 4. As major realignments begin to occur in the FBS, UM expects to see changes all around the Big Sky Conference as teams enter and leave the league. **ANTONIO IBARRA | MONTANA KAIMIN**

ence, stated in an email.

Rodgers said Big Sky Commissioner Tom Wistrill has advocated to expand the field to ensure those opportunities are not diminished.

When the conference realignment fever hits the NCAA, it is done quickly and without much press coverage until the school makes a decision, as this creates an atmosphere where negotiations regarding television contracts and school income may become volatile, according to Haslam.

“Anytime you talk about conference realignment, you’ve really got to keep it quiet. It’s got to be done fast,” Haslam said. “It’s not publicized. It’s like what Texas and Oklahoma did. One minute they’re in the Big 12 and a few weeks later they’re gone.”

In an attempt to help gain notoriety in and around athletics in the Big Sky Conference, the league signed a deal with ESPN to broadcast games on ESPN+. In a football game this year between UM and Eastern Washington,

ESPN boosted the game to be on ESPN2, one of its two trademark cable stations.

“This landmark agreement for the Big Sky and our membership rightfully aligns the nation’s preeminent FCS conference with the strongest media brand in sports,” said Big Sky Commissioner Tom Wistrill in a June, 2021 press release.

Bodnar addressed the University’s process of consulting with its athletics department if the school was to change conferences.

“I can only speak for UM. Here, we always consult with the athletic director (Haslam) and other athletic department leaders on decisions of significant magnitude,” he stated in an email.

As of now, Bodnar said, there have been no official talks between UM and the Big Sky Conference regarding expansion or retraction.

New faces in new places: Meet some UM basketball newbies

JACK MARSHALL

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When Montana freshman guard Johnny Braggs was asked about his hometown of Las Vegas where he played at prestigious prep school Bishop Gorman, he described it as “always going a hundred miles an hour.” When asked about his new home of Missoula, Montana, he had a bit of a different response.

“I’ve been seeing a lot of deer,” Braggs said jokingly.

Braggs is one of seven new members of the 16-man Montana basketball squad. He is also one of four freshmen who will be joining the Griz.

Braggs’s home in the desert of Nevada is over 13 hours from Missoula, but he actually resided closest to Montana of any of the new freshmen. The freshman who came from the farthest away to land in the Zoo is forward John Solomon, who journeyed from Sarasota, Florida.

“It’s a pretty laid back beach town,” Solomon said of Sarasota. “People come from all over just to see the beach and the nice weather.”

Solomon played three of his high school seasons in Florida and one (his junior year) at Desert Vista High School in Phoenix. When he first came to Missoula, he was struck by its landscape.

“It was very beautiful to see the mountains,” Solomon said. “It was just gorgeous to me.”

While Braggs and Solomon came from

towns where tourists may frequent, freshman guard Jack Wetzel grew up in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

“It is very flat, but the people love basketball,” said Wetzel of his mid-U.S. home.

The three are all now part of a Montana basketball team that only has one Montana native on it: Bozemanite Mack Anderson. Out of the players not from Montana, none of them are even from states that border California.

“We’re from all over, so we kind of just bond,” Solomon said. “We’re all here together.”

Braggs, Solomon and Wetzel all showcased their potential in future years for the Griz in the Maroon and Silver scrimmage, which took place Oct. 27.

Solomon started at center for the silver team and quickly showed off the benefits of his 6-foot-8 frame when he pulled down a few rebounds. Solomon also displayed his ability to finish close to the rim when he put in an easy layup off a feed from one of his teammates.

“If I can work hard every day, get better every day, then I’ll be putting myself in a good spot,” Solomon said.

Braggs flaunted his athleticism and explosiveness through the scrimmage, including when he fought for a tough offensive rebound and then quickly jumped into the air again to finish a savvy put-back layup. Braggs also showed some confidence in his long-range shooting ability when he took multiple shots from long range.

“[My goal is] to have a solid freshman year and keep learning how they do things and just play hard every game,” Braggs said.

Wetzel made his impact from long range known when he swished a corner 3-point shot in the scrimmage. The 6-foot-4 guard also showed his ability to guard on the ball and took a step-back 3-point shot that showed true confidence in his shotmaking ability.

“Win a lot of games,” Wetzel said regarding his goal for the upcoming season. “Win the conference, knock down shots and then do anything I can do to support the team.”

Freshman Cooper Kriegmont is the only other true freshman on the basketball team, hailing from Juneau, Alaska. Kriegmont saw limited action in the Maroon and Silver scrimmage.

The upcoming season started on Nov. 9 at home against Dickinson State for both the UM men’s and women’s basketball teams. Montana came into the Big Sky Conference tournament as a sixth seed in its last season, but made it to the semifinals after upsetting third-seeded Weber State.



Freshman guard Johnny Braggs (4), a Nevada native, and freshman forward John Solomon (10), who hails from Florida, are two of seven new members of the 16-man Montana basketball squad for the 2021-2022 season. **ANTONIO IBARRA | MONTANA KAIMIN**



Freshman guard Jack Wetzel (3) from Iowa is also one of seven new players for Montana’s basketball crew. Wetzel, Braggs and Solomon showcased their basketball potential for the Griz in the Maroon and Silver scrimmage on Oct. 27. **ANTONIO IBARRA | MONTANA KAIMIN**

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Creepy crawlies call UM's Biology Research Building home

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An old office in the University's Biology Research Building holds a lot of unlikely guests.

The walls are lined with glass tanks, plastic tubs and humidifiers. Inside the tanks live 11 different species of insects, a tarantula, millipedes, stick bugs and more. What used to be an ordinary office space is now a jungle escape filled with beautiful and mildly terrifying creatures.

These insects once lived at the Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium on Front Street before the location closed, so the University offered a temporary home to the many-legged friends stuck in limbo. The Butterfly House has broken ground on a new location on the Missoula Fairgrounds, where the insects will return in the future.

The Missoula Butterfly House puts on various events to educate and inspire Missoulians on insects and the natural world. It often brings the insects to these events, allowing people of all ages to hold and learn about the various insects in their care.

Until then, they are cared for in the office space by bug care interns, like Hallee Olsen. Olsen is a junior at the University of Montana studying wildlife biology. She has been working with the bugs since May, when she found the unique opportunity online. Every day she reaches in one of the tanks and confidently picks up a Vietnamese walking stick, which lives in a colony of clones. The stick bugs are all females, cloned from one another and therefore sharing the same genetic makeup.



Hallee Olsen, a bug care intern and University of Montana student, gracefully holds a leaf bug as she takes a closer look. Olsen cares for these bugs once a week as a "bug care" intern. The Missoula Butterfly House and Insectarium will soon relocate to the Missoula Fairgrounds where the bugs will have a new home.

BELOW: An Australian walking stick perches peacefully in Olsen's hands. Walking stick insects are herbivores and native to Australia.



A giant African millipede sits on Olsen's hands above a container filled with soil, cucumbers and lettuce. Though millipede means "thousand feet," most giant African millipedes only have 300 to 400 legs.



Olsen holds a Vietnamese walking stick in the Biology Research Building on campus Oct. 21. The room where the bugs now live used to be an office, but was transformed into a bug haven when the Missoula Butterfly House closed its location on Front Street in August 2019.